

# Written comments show people split on freeway

By Doug Murphy  
Staff Writer

It probably won't come as a surprise that how people view the proposed South Mountain Loop 202 freeway depends on how close they live to the freeway.

But what was surprising is that people in the West Valley often cited surface and freeway congestion as a reason for the freeway while people in Ahwatukee Foothills pointed to noise, pollution and community impact.

That is the bottom line after a four-month analysis of over 2,100 written comments collected by the Arizona Department of Transportation, from November 2005 to February 2006.

"This is not a scientific survey," explained Theresa Gunn, the owner of Peoria-based Gunn Communications

Inc., during an April 6 meeting of the South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team.

She made clear that the results weren't a vote, that the people who responded were self-selected, and that the results aren't scientific.

But still, the results of the public comments did show some interesting trends.

People who live closest to the proposed freeway were the most likely to write in opposing it, often saying there is no need.

Support came from those who lived farther away and they often cited traffic congestion and the need for a Valley-wide system.

Those results prove true for people from Ahwatukee Foothills who took the time to comment in writing to ADOT.

People who live farthest from the Loop 202 and closest to Interstate 10, in ZIP code 85044, were almost evenly split, with 47 percent prefer-

ring a freeway on the Gila River Indian Community and 40 percent wanting Pecos Road.

In the 85048 ZIP code, which covers much of the proposed route, 2 percent preferred Pecos Road with 84 percent wanting the Indian alternative or nothing.

In the western portion of Ahwatukee Foothills, in the 85045 ZIP code where some of the newest and most expensive homes back up to Pecos Road, the response was even more stark, with 93 percent preferring the Gila River Indian Community or opposing construction entirely.

Of all the written comments received by ADOT, 78 percent came from Ahwatukee Foothill residents.

But people in other portions of the Valley also have strong feelings about the freeway.

In the West Valley Estrella Village area, between I-10 and the Salt River, 75 percent of

## Sampling of comments

### From Ahwatukee Foothills:

"If it goes through, I will move."

"Consider air-conditioned underground rail."

"Get started – another five years of study will create more problems."

"Don't build the freeway and ruin a wonderful community!"

"It is a 20-year (old) plan that doesn't work today."

"Keep negotiating with Gila River Indians on using their unused land."

"If it needs to be built, please at least put it below ground."

"I've lived here for 18 years and anticipated it being built!"

"This is primarily a bypass for truckers."

### South Mountain Village:

"Southwest Phoenix is the only area

without a freeway – it's our turn."

"Can't wait – start now."

"Going to be necessary, even if I don't like it."

### Estrella Village:

"Felt we were kept in the dark until it is too late."

"Rush it through – we need it."

"Stay off I-10."

"Widen I-10."

### Laveen Village:

"This whole thing stinks."

"Sad to see all the farm land taken away."

"Choose the least destructive route."

"Please don't allow people in Ahwatukee to dictate what others of us want."

the people who commented want the freeway. In the Laveen Village, just south of the Salt River, 74 percent of the respondents also chose the freeway. In both cases residents said they thought the freeway would help relieve congestion on surface streets.

Further west, com-

ments from people in Avondale, Buckeye and Goodyear also supported the freeway by 70 percent, also pointing to the need to relieve traffic congestion.

Even people in the South Mountain Village area, north of Ahwatukee Foothills and South Mountain, wanted the freeway.

Gridlock on surface streets, traffic on I-10 and congestion in central Phoenix was cited by 88 percent of the respondents.

To view the report visit [www.southmountainfreeway.org](http://www.southmountainfreeway.org)  
Staff writer Doug Murphy can be reached at (480) 898-7914 or [dmurphy@aztrib.com](mailto:dmurphy@aztrib.com).